

July 17, 2008

To: Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

From: Linda Krop, Chair, Conservation Working Group

Re: **CWG Report – July 16, 2008 Meeting**

Attendance: Linda Krop, Chair (EDC); Jean Holmes (LWVSB); Shiva Polefka (EDC); Michael Smith (Gray Whales Count); Jackie Dragon (SeaFlow); John Kuizenga (CINC); Michael Hanrahan (The Ocean Channel); Kira Redmond (SB Channelkeeper); Vic Cox; Megan McKenna (Scripps Institute of Oceanography)

CINMS Staff Present: Mike Murray

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

- A. **Draft CWG Report:** Shiva provided an update on the status and progress of the draft report. He has received input and feedback from several scientists in the field. He reviewed the draft report, which will be presented to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. As part of his presentation, he reviewed the recommendations and entertained questions and comments from the Working Group. Michael Smith referred to an article in the New Yorker titled “The Island in the Wind” by Elizabeth Kolbert. Jean Holmes noted the importance of securing data from other locations and reaching out to other Sanctuaries. John Kuizenga asked about monitoring in Alaska. Mike Murray thanked Shiva and Julia Forgie for preparing a well-researched report, and acknowledged the need for Sanctuary-wide support. We talked about the need to develop educational materials, and to coordinate with the Sanctuary Education Team (SET). Mike was asked whether other SACs or Sanctuaries are considering this issue, and he replied by noting that the Gulf of Farallones SAC is addressing climate change issues. Shiva is trying to contact a scientist on the Olympic Coast NMS Advisory Council. Michael Hanrahan observed that the CINMS could be considered the “canary in the coal mine” on this issue, and a key monitoring site, given the coldwater upwelling that occurs here.
- B. **SAC Presentations:** Dr. Victoria Fabry will provide a scientific overview at the SAC meeting on July 18. At the same meeting, Shiva will present our draft report and solicit input from the SAC. We will then bring a proposed final report to the SAC in September, when we will also schedule presentations from the UCSB Hofman Lab regarding local

impacts, and from the Feely group regarding their data and research on the issue.

III. SAC ISSUES

A. Subcommittee recommendations re Emergency Response Plan re Reducing Ship Strikes on Large Cetaceans

Linda (a member of the subcommittee) reported on the favorable SAC support for the CWG recommendations last session, including support for (1) sending notices to mariners immediately, advising them of the presence of blue whales in the Channel and recommending reduced ship speed; (2) expanding the scope of the plan to include all large cetaceans; and (3) establishing a Working Group. Linda also shared the Notice to Mariners (NOTAM) that was sent on June 25, which did not include any recommended speed limit. Linda and others on the SAC have responded to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), asking for a stronger notice.

Mike Murray informed us that NMFS will have a response at the SAC meeting. Mike also informed the CWG that the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the Coast Guard, claiming that the Coast Guard violated the Endangered Species Act by failing to consult with NMFS. Because of the litigation, the Coast Guard is not engaging in discussions with the CINMS. Finally, Mike said that the CINMS is talking with both NMFS and the Marine Exchange to develop more effective notices.

Megan McKenna, from Scripps, informed the Group that she will make a presentation at the SAC meeting regarding her analysis of the data from last fall. According to Megan, the data – which focused mainly on cargo ships, but included some tankers – shows that there was no statistical change in speed based on the two notices that were sent last year. The average speed remained 19 knots, with a maximum of 25 knots.

Jackie Dragon of SeaFlow talked about her group's efforts to focus on the broader issues surrounding shipping, including air, water and noise pollution. She pointed out that reducing ship speed would result in many benefits and recommended adoption of an interim speed limit of 10 knots. We noted that local Air Pollution Control Districts are also considering the benefits of reducing ship speed as a means to reduce air pollution, and discussed the potential for partnering with them on this issue.

Linda will ask for another subcommittee meeting before the SAC meeting to address (1) the notices and interim speed limits; and (2) the establishment of a Working Group that would include other stakeholders

interested in shipping and ship strike issues. Linda will recommend that an agenda item be placed on the September SAC agenda to address these issues.

Mike Murray reminded the Group that the draft plan endorsed in May includes other recommendations, such as increased aerial monitoring and an emergency response plan.

B. Marine Reserves/MLPA

Linda advised the CWG that the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) initiated a process under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) to consider the establishment of marine protected areas in the So. Cal. Region, which includes the Santa Barbara Channel state waters. Linda pointed out that when the MLPA process began, conservationists assumed that the CDFG would focus on the mainland coast, but we have learned since then that the Channel Islands marine reserves will be part of the discussion. This inclusion means that the existing reserves could be modified or eliminated. Linda reminded the CWG of its ten years of work that resulted in the establishment of the Channel Islands marine reserves, and recommended that we stay involved in the issue. CWG member Kira Redmond said that the SB Channelkeeper has hired someone to work on the MLPA issue and has nominated this person to serve on the stakeholder committee. CWG members Shiva Polefka and Greg Helms are also involved in the issue, and Greg has been nominated to serve on the committee as well. The first stakeholder meeting will take place in September.